

rural areas the actual care delivery system being strained, people having to drive further and further distances to receive access to even emergency primary health care services.

On technology, we see people use the Internet to access a variety of information; and yet we see that the prospect of the digital divide, separating the kind of Internet access that provides so many new opportunities for us across the country, may provide a distinct have and have-not, with rural America being left behind as the latest technology comes on board.

For all of these reasons, I am very proud to join with my colleagues in the Rural Caucus. I commend the bipartisan effort, and I know that we will stand together as we face these challenges.

#### THE CONGRESSIONAL RURAL CAUCUS: SPEAKING OUT FOR RURAL AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, tonight I join the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY) and my other cochairs, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) and the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. EMERSON), as we celebrate today the coming together of about 212 Members of Congress, both Republicans and Democrats, to revitalize the Congressional Rural Caucus. Last year the four of us came together with this common goal: to speak out for rural America and to find ways that we could do that here in the United States Congress. Today, we have celebrated the hard work and our ability to bring us all together for a united voice for rural America.

Our jobs as Members of the Congressional Rural Caucus, and we would enjoin any of our colleagues to continue to join us in this pursuit, is to promote economic and social policies that support and help the continued viability of our rural communities. In many instances throughout my home State of Kansas, our rural communities continue to struggle. We continue to lose population from once-thriving communities and elsewhere across the Great Plains region. Demographic trends show that young people are leaving the lands of their ancestors and that the population left behind is rapidly aging.

Kansas has 105 counties. Fifty-eight of those counties are smaller today than they were in 1890. Eighty Kansas counties have lost population in the last 2 decades. Seventy counties will lose population in the next decade.

So as a result, Kansas communities are confronted with serious challenges of prosperity and even of survival. Concerned parents wonder if their children will receive a public school education sufficient to meet the demands of tomorrow's global marketplace. I myself

want to raise my children, I have a 9-year-old daughter and a 12-year-old daughter, I would like for them to have the opportunity to be raised in rural America and to raise their children, if they so choose, in rural Kansas; and we are concerned about the availability not only of education but of health care, especially in our smallest communities. Even though our unemployment rates are low, we see significant under-employment in many areas of rural Kansas. That is the state of the job market in too many of our small communities.

The world of information technology, the Internet, is equally important to our towns and to our homes. Connecting that last mile will be a formidable challenge. Telecommunications is vital to rural America's economic development. It is vital to our schools and our hospitals, and it is vital to our businesses. Business must have access to deal with their customers and suppliers; students and individuals need access to the Internet to communicate, to acquire knowledge and develop skills to maintain our competitiveness.

I serve as the chairman of the Telecommunications Task Force of the Congressional Rural Caucus; and I am committed to working with other Members of Congress, with the industry and with the administration, to ensure the availability of advanced telecommunications services in our rural communities. Many of the challenges confronting rural America can be met and overcome with the commitment that adequate resources are directed toward the development of rural communities, and access to telecommunications is one of those critical issues we face.

By bringing quality health care, education, information, and commerce to rural families and to business, an advanced telecommunication infrastructure can overcome any disadvantages of distance and low density.

By providing one voice for rural America, the congressional caucus will ensure communities remain viable and competitive. Our job in Congress is to raise the awareness of rural issues to preserve this way of life. As Congress debates important issues like access to telecommunications, we must address the opportunities and challenges that we face in rural America. Rural America across this country needs to demonstrate to ourselves and to the rest of the world our commitment for a better life. I urge my colleagues to join us in this effort to fight and to speak out for rural America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentle-

woman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. CLAYTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. EMERSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. EMERSON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO THE REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Speaker, we just passed out of this House tonight H.R. 431, a very important piece of legislation, expressing support for humanitarian assistance to the Republic of Mozambique. I want to commend our government, nongovernmental organizations, and other nations for their response to the flood crisis in Mozambique. Cyclone Eline devastated that poor country, driving residents from their homes, children from their schools, shopkeepers from their businesses, and doctors and patients from their clinics. The only refuge was roofs, treetops and scraps of land protruding here and there from swirling waters. One young woman, Sophie Pedro, gave birth to a baby girl in a tree top where she had sought refuge for 4 days.

The heavy toll on the population and massive destruction of the infrastructure, however, have dwarfed these early emergency relief-and-rescue efforts.

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The flood waters have destroyed a decade-long economic recovery undertaken by Mozambique. Before these disastrous floods, Mr. Speaker, the government had embarked upon sustained efforts to manage public resources better, improve the climate for investors, and promote private sector development. Mozambique had complied with the Structural Adjustment Program requirements, the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility, and more recently the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative.

Last year, Mozambique completed the requirement to receive \$3.7 billion in debt reduction from external creditors, the largest reduction under the HIPC Initiative. Prudent fiscal and monetary policies and structural reforms increased international confidence in Mozambique's economy, reflected in higher long-term capital inflows and a stable exchange rate.

However, the disaster now will cost the country nearly all their hard-won